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## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
December 3, 1855.

Sir: I have the honor to submit to you a brief history of the operations, during the past year, of this department. It is one of the largest in the Government. Its branches are numerous and extensive, and in no respect homogeneous; hence the labor is the more perplexing and intense.

Many interesting and important questions relative to the public lands have arisen, and the business of the department has been so increased, that it has required all its energy and ability to answer promptly and satisfactorily the urgent demands of the public; but it has been so well managed that, perhaps, the bureau was never in better condition.

The surveys have been vigorously prosecuted, and extended to the newly organized Territories, from which already valuable reports have been received.

The quantity of land ready to be brought into market during the coming year will be large, and, added to that now subject to private entry, will be presumed, be ample to supply the most extensive demand.

It has been the endeavor of the Land Office, in executing the graduation law, to protect, and, at the same time, promote, as far as practicable, the interest of the actual bona fide settler, and to aid as little as possible the schemes of the mere speculator. The law was intended to encourage and secure the permanent resident; but the provisions in relation to this design were defective, and have given rise to many grave questions difficult of solution. The office was compelled to require the production of satisfactory proof, within a reasonable period, of a substantial compliance with the requirements of the law as a prerequisite to the issue of the patent. This is the most important safeguard that could be adopted against the numerous frauds attempted to be perpetrated under the law, and still it may become necessary for Congress to interpose, in order that it may be executed in its spirit; otherwise its design may be frustrated and defeated.

The quantity of land sold at graduated prices during the last fiscal year was 8,720,474 acres: amount received therefor, \$2,358,918.

In the year ending the 30th of September last, 15,315,238.18 acres of land have been surveyed. Besides this, the true boundary line between Alabama and Florida has been established, and many other surveys made to correct errors in defective previous surveys, and to prepare for the discontinuance of the office of surveyor general in several of the districts. No new land was brought into market, however, owing to the large body of lands already subject to entry.

The quantity of lands sold for cash during the last fiscal year was 15,729,524.88 acres: amount received therefor, \$1,455,354.75. Located with military scrip and land warrants, 1,345,580.00 Swamp lands—sold for cash, 7,470,746.00 Sold on donations for railroads, 11,525.00

Making a total of, 24,557,409.50 Exhibiting an increase of 5,693,789.61 acres over the previous year, of lands sold for cash, and a decrease of 2,011,222.26 acres located with scrip and warrants. The quantity that will be entered the present fiscal year with land warrants will be much larger, the number being greatly multiplied by the requirements of the recent bounty land law.

The amount of lands sold during the second and third quarters of the present calendar year is about 6,264,163 acres; being an increase of about 827,625 acres (in cash \$477,442.06) on that of the corresponding quarters of the preceding year.

This is owing, in a great measure, to the extraordinary activity and prosperity of the country, but it is feared, to some degree, to the influence of speculation.

The quantity of land covered by warrants, issued to soldiers of all the wars in which the United States has been engaged, is 37,958,412 acres, which enormous amount, taken in connection with our liberal system of pensions, evinces, in an eminent degree, the gratitude of our country for the patriotism of its citizens is not impaired by the lapse of time, nor its acknowledgment extended with an illiberal hand.

Under the several acts of Congress for the satisfaction of Virginia military land warrants, there were taken 1,400,000 acres of the public lands. Acts have been passed for the issue of scrip to satisfy this class of warrants, which are being faithfully and yet liberally executed. Although complaints have been made of a too rigid construction of the law, and against some of the rules and regulations prescribed under it, yet it will be found, on inquiry, that every latitude has been given that a fair observance of its provisions would admit. It has been contended that the decisions of the Executive of the State are obligatory and conclusive upon the Department, unless fraud is clearly shown. But, with the greatest respect for that functionary and his opinions, I found myself on this point involved in this difficulty; that one Executive had allowed what another Executive had rejected, and in the law under which I acted required, as prerequisite to the issue of the scrip, that the Secretary of the Interior, on the surrender of the warrant, should be satisfied, "by a revision of the proofs, or by additional testimony, that any warrant thus surrendered was fairly and lawfully procured in pursuance of the laws of said Commonwealth." In some cases there were no proofs nor additional testimony, and I could not do otherwise, under the express mandate of the law, than reject or suspend them. What is technically termed "dead," as well as "superfluous" services, in conformity with the opinion of the Attorney General, have been rejected, and the most liberal course pursued in the examination of all other classes. With a strong disposition to favor the applicants, I am persuaded there are some of the claims that will not bear the requisite scrutiny, and are not, on their merits, entitled to a patent.

My views respecting policy, which has for many years been pursued, of making grants of public lands in alternate sections in aid of the construction of great leading thoroughfares in the new States, have been so fully expressed in my former reports, as to render anything more than a brief allusion to the subject unnecessary. I reiterate, however, the importance of properly discriminating between enterprises of this character which deserve the fostering aid of Government, and those which are not called for by public considerations, and of surrounding all such grants with proper restrictions and guards to prevent fraud, and protect the interests of the United States and the people.

Such discrimination and precaution will not, it is believed, be found more difficult in this than in any other species of legislation.

The act of 8th August, 1846 granted to the State of Wisconsin, for improving the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, and to connect the same by a canal, a quantity of land, equal to one half of three sections in width, on each side of the Fox river and the lake through which it passes, from its mouth to the point where the Portage canal shall enter the same, and on each side of said canal from one stream to the other. This grant covered some 260,433 acres, of which three were selected and approved 208,393 acres leaving 52,130 acres, the same having been sold by the Government previous to the grant. No provision having been made for an equivalent, the Governor of Wisconsin selected 60,822 acres of the United States alternate sections, which, in a spirit of liberality, were reserved from sale, subject to the further action of Congress for the purpose of supplying the residuum.

The subsequent act of 1854, and the explanatory resolution of 1855, were passed to remove the doubts entertained relative to the proper construction of the act making the grant.

These required the application to the act of 1846, of the principles governing the grant to the State of Indiana for canal purposes. The Land Office, assuming these as its guide, determined, by a liberal construction of all the acts and the resolution, to give to Wisconsin five, instead of three sections, for the width of the grant, and the one half of the sum of the actual members of both shores, and the canal, the river, and the lakes, with all their sinuosities, including the lake Winnebago, as the length of the grant. Thus it was enlarged to 684,269 acres, being an increase of 428,836 acres over the original grant. But the company, which purports to have succeeded to the rights of the State, not satisfied with the construction given to the law by the Land Office, preferred a claim for the alternate sections on the Wisconsin river, from where it enters the Mississippi to the portage, which would enlarge the grant upon 352,000 acres, increasing it from 260,433 acres to 1,036,269 acres, and probably much more, depending on the rule that might be adopted.

Wisconsin river having never been embraced by any action of Congress, but the grant being expressly restricted to the Fox river, lake and portage, the claim, after full examination by the late Commissioner of the Land Office, and review, on appeal, by me, with every proper disposition to favor the State, was rejected, and the grant has been confined to the alternate sections on the Wisconsin river. The act of 29th June, 1854, proposed to grant lands to the Territory of Minnesota, amounting by estimate to 1,171,200 acres, for aiding in the construction of a railroad from the northern boundary of Iowa to the western extremity of Lake Superior, and was unconditionally repealed by the act of 4th August, 1854, and the same day the same was withdrawn from sale in July of the same year, as falling within the probable limits of this proposed grant, were accordingly restored to market, and the law treated as a nullity, in all executive action, after its repeal.

I must repeat my recommendation to prohibit officers from making the survey and sale of the public lands, from becoming purchasers, the evils flowing from its permission are so obvious, that it would only seem necessary to draw attention to it, to induce its prohibition.

Much difficulty has been experienced in the execution of the laws granting the swamp and overflowed lands to the several States in which they lie. Some of the States have been slow to take any action, and have been suspended for further inquiry and investigation. Efforts are making to settle and adjust all claims, and it is hoped this will soon be done, to the mutual satisfaction of the States interested and the Government. The acts of Congress upon the subject are not free from ambiguity, but the indications of policy toward the new States are highly creditable, and given universal sanction.

The commission to ascertain and settle the private land claims in California will be able to complete its labors within the period fixed by law, and I am happy to say, without making further draft on the Treasury. Its conduct, in the discharge of its duties, has been highly creditable, and given universal sanction. Under the act of July 27, 1854, a board of commissioners was appointed, and convened at Vincennes, in the State of Indiana, to ascertain and adjust the titles to lands in that State, under the several acts of Congress making and confirming grants of lands to that State, the section required it to close, by the 1st of September last. It was unable to finish the business confided to it, and it therefore becomes necessary to revive the old board, or create a new one. The latter is, perhaps, the better course; and it is supposed that one commission will be sufficient, who should be appointed for a limited period, and authorized to decide upon such claims as from any cause have not been acted upon.

New land districts are frequently carved out of old ones, and the acts are made to take effect from their passage. The officers in the old districts cannot receive timely notice, so as to prevent sales of the lands in the new districts. To obviate this difficulty, it is proposed to withdraw unnecessarily from the market the lands in the new districts, previous to their thorough organization, it is proper to provide, by general law, that the new offices shall not go into operation for six months from the passage of the law establishing them, unless, in the judgment of the President, an earlier period is necessary.

The affairs of the Pension Office have been conducted with great efficiency and signal ability. Its business has largely increased, and rendered the labors of the Commissioner and his subordinates arduous and severe. Most of the claims have been examined, and a large branch is up to date, except that having charge of bounty lands granted by the recent act of Congress to certain officers and soldiers who have been engaged in the military service of the United States. Strenuous and unremitting efforts have been made promptly to execute the act, and every latitude has been given that a fair observance of its provisions would admit. It has been contended that the decisions of the Executive of the State are obligatory and conclusive upon the Department, unless fraud is clearly shown. But, with the greatest respect for that functionary and his opinions, I found myself on this point involved in this difficulty; that one Executive had allowed what another Executive had rejected, and in the law under which I acted required, as prerequisite to the issue of the scrip, that the Secretary of the Interior, on the surrender of the warrant, should be satisfied, "by a revision of the proofs, or by additional testimony, that any warrant thus surrendered was fairly and lawfully procured in pursuance of the laws of said Commonwealth." In some cases there were no proofs nor additional testimony, and I could not do otherwise, under the express mandate of the law, than reject or suspend them. What is technically termed "dead," as well as "superfluous" services, in conformity with the opinion of the Attorney General, have been rejected, and the most liberal course pursued in the examination of all other classes. With a strong disposition to favor the applicants, I am persuaded there are some of the claims that will not bear the requisite scrutiny, and are not, on their merits, entitled to a patent.

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It may become advisable to fall back upon the old principle of indigence, to which every citizen having any claim to humanity, would cordially subscribe. If it was assessed, and the meritorious and needy soldier, his widow, or minor children, could receive enough to supply their necessary wants, no one would raise the slightest objection to such manifestation of the public gratitude. Now, they are in receipt

of a few dollars a month, which all know is entirely insufficient for the most ordinary purposes. If pensions were confined to this class, and their gratitudes properly enlarged, the system would meet with universal approval.

I beg leave again to bring to your notice the statute limiting to two years prosecutions for perjury and forgery committed in pension and land warrant cases. Many criminals have set up this plea, and escaped the vigilance of the bureau, and the prosecuting officers. In most cases it is hard to detect the culprit long after the time for the institution of legal proceedings has expired. There were nine convictions during the last year, and a like number of prosecutions are now pending.

The number of pensioners on the rolls of the several agencies for paying pensions was, on the 30th June last, 14,488; and the amount disbursed during the last fiscal year was \$1,505,112.31.

The sums in the hands of pension agents have at length been reduced to what is required for the semi-annual payments, allowing a small margin—having been reduced, in the aggregate, from \$248,475.80, on the 31st of March, 1855, to \$20,099.38, on the 30th of June last. In my last report, I remarked that, from the large amounts it had been customary for them to have on hand, it was not doubted that they had been fully compensated for their services. The more information obtained in this regard, the more confirmed am I in the correctness of that opinion. The present compensation, when the agents are governed by the existing statute law, must be sufficient, as the offices are earnestly sought after, and the duties were never more faithfully performed.

My attention was early drawn to the fact, that advances to a considerable amount had been made to the agents appointed for the payment of army pensions, under the acts of May, 1828, and 7th July, 1832. Each of these acts contains a clause making the requisite appropriation for the payment of all the claims which may be admitted under it; and hence it has not been necessary to ask for yearly appropriations from Congress in these as in other cases. Advantage has been taken of this circumstance to make the advance referred to, and, on examination, it was found that the amount in the hands of the agents exceeded, under one act, what would be required to be disbursed during a period of several quarters, and, under the other, of several years.

No satisfactory authority was found to exist for withdrawing the money from the treasury, and a great deal of trouble was incurred in appropriating, except such portion only as was actually required for current use under the law. Instructions were, therefore, given to discontinue the practice of making such advances, and to require those already made to be refunded to the treasury. The result of this action is exhibited by the following statement:

Amount collected and repaid to the treasury, under the act of 15th May, 1828, from 1st July, 1853, to 30th June, 1855.....	\$50,002.69
Amount collected and repaid to the treasury, under the act of 7th July, 1832, from 1st July, 1853, to 30th June, 1855.....	201,123.65
Making an aggregate of.....	251,126.34
During the same period the payments made under the same acts were, under the act of 15th May, 1828.....	\$15,572.00
Under act of 7th July, 1832.....	170,437.45
.....	186,009.05

Leaving an excess of collections over expenditures of..... \$70,822.29

which has been carried to the surplus fund. From this it will be seen, that the money, in fact, drawn from the treasury during the last two fiscal years, on account of the pensions admitted under these acts; but that all those pensions, including the commissions of the pension agents, and the incidental expenses of the several agencies, amounting in all to \$186,309.05, were satisfied out of the collections made as before shown; besides which the sum of \$70,822.29, not wanted for immediate use, was paid back into the treasury.

In view of these facts, and to guard against a recurrence of a similar state of things, it is respectfully suggested that Congress be requested to repeal the appropriating clause in the acts alluded to, so as to render it necessary hereafter to rely upon annual appropriations for the means of executing them, as in other cases. The accounts of the pension agents are at present adjusted by the Third and Fourth Auditors; the former being charged of those for the army, and the latter of those for the navy pensions, subject to the revision of the Second Comptroller of the Treasury. Consequently, however faithful and conscientious these officers may be, a perfect uniformity cannot be expected in the adjustment of those accounts, although no good reason is apparent why the same should be so. It is proposed to govern in respect to each class of claims, and to secure such uniformity is quite desirable, and this could be done by causing all the accounts of those agents to be audited in one office. It is also important that these accounts, before being submitted to the accounting officers of the Treasury, be audited by the supervision of this department, from which the remittances to the agents are ordered.

The accounts growing out of the survey and sale of the public lands, involving much larger amounts, have for years past been audited at the General Land Office, subject to the revision of the First Comptroller of the Treasury, and the practice has been attended with good results.

The accounts of the pension agents could, in like manner, be audited at the Pension Office, with great convenience to the service and advantage to the Government, subject to the same revision as at present, and so the department would be relieved of the expense of maintaining a separate office for the purpose. Instead of one, being adjusted by the Interior and revised by the Treasury Department. Should this recommendation be adopted, all the advantages above suggested would be secured, in addition to which, this department would have within itself such information as it is constantly in need of in the administration of its financial affairs.

A similar suggestion is made in respect to the accounts for the Indian service, which are at present adjusted by the Second Auditor, subject to the revision of the Second Comptroller of the Treasury. It is believed that these accounts could be audited, with equal convenience and benefit, at the Indian Bureau, subject of course, to the same revision as at present, and that similar advantages would thus be secured in reference to them, as in the cases previously alluded to.

The field-work of the Mexican boundary survey, I rejoice to say, has been completed. The promptitude, dispatch, and eminent ability displayed in its recent prosecution, has not the highest credit upon the commissioner. Under the severest hardships and greatest privations, he has run the line through a country generally destitute of everything necessary to the sustenance of human life, in a remarkable short space of time, and yet left nothing undone which duty required. The appropriation made for this specific purpose has not been exhausted, but a large balance remains unexpended. The office-work will now be prosecuted with vigor, and finished as soon as practicable.

A full report of the operations of the Commission, when published, will exhibit much interesting information. The survey belongs to another department, and the supervisory power over their accounts, as well as those of the clerks of the Federal courts, is confided to this. The system does not work well, and it is impossible to correct its many defects without a thorough revision of the laws relating to and regulating it. Perhaps the best disposition that could be made of it would be to assign the accounting part to the Treasury Department, and confide the other powers to the Attorney General. A judicious and well-attended revision would remedy the many evils that have

the remains of ancient Spanish mining operations yet exist. The western portion of the country bordering upon the Colorado and Gila rivers presents a strong contrast, being a hospitable desert, though known to abound in silver ore.

This territory is not so much the abode of hostile Indians, as it is the avenue through which they pass from their country north of the Gila to the northern States of Mexico. A portion of it, however, is occupied by a semi-civilized nation of Indians composed of a confederacy of Pimos and Maricopas Indians, numbering, it is said, about two thousand warriors. They till the soil with much success, raising cotton, wheat, corn, and beans, and are said to be ever kind and friendly to American emigrants passing through their country to California. They are understood to set up a claim to the land they occupy, under some general law of Spain or Mexico, and manifest much anxiety lest by the transfer of territory to the United States their possession may be disturbed or injuriously affected.

They are said to be at constant war with the hostile tribes inhabiting the country north of the Gila, and their only barrier to the occupation of this newly acquired country.

These facts would seem to claim for them peculiar consideration at the hands of the Government.

Attention is again earnestly called to the importance of an early survey and demarcation of the boundary line between the United States and the British Provinces in the northwest. In order to prevent future difficulties and embarrassments, it is deemed that the whole of the unsurveyed boundary between the two countries should be authoritatively established upon the ground, but more especially that portion of it which forms the northern boundary of the newly organized Territory of Washington. In the channel which separates Vancouver's Island from the main continent, and through the middle of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, there is a large and interesting group of islands which are much desired by our citizens, but the settlement of them will naturally be retarded, if not entirely prevented, until the boundary line shall have been definitely determined.

The reorganization of the Patent Office has been perfected, and its good effect already sensibly experienced.

Several important amendments to the patent laws were suggested by the Commissioner of Patents, in his last report, which are necessary to the more efficient action of the Bureau, and are in the most reasonable and entirely unobjectionable.

Since the 1st of January last, there have been issued upwards of eighteen hundred patents, and, within the year, the number will probably reach two thousand. This is the result of the judicious and excellent system that has been adopted, which enables the office promptly to examine and dispose of every application that is presented.

Several of the rooms in the basement story of the Patent Office building are occupied by the Indian Bureau. Previously, it was in a building not fire-proof, and much exposed to conflagration. It did not feel justified in keeping the same, and, in consequence, the papers, of such immense value and importance, of which the loss would be irreparable, both in a historical and pecuniary point of view. Experience has already taught its folly, and the lesson should not be disregarded.

Before directing the change to be made, I caused an estimate to be made, and found that the cost to the United States for the new building, including the cost of the land, would be about \$100,000, and that, during the four years, would amount to nearly \$10,000 without any corresponding benefit to the Government.

By the same, Congress has made appropriations for constructing court-houses, in conjunction with the new public buildings. Their necessity becomes daily more apparent. The public money may not be so judiciously expended, and I doubt whether it will be applied to purposes of greater utility.

Within a few years, the business of the Patent Office will require the whole of the entire building in which it now is, and the department of the Interior will have to seek elsewhere. If an appropriation for the erection of a proper department building were now made, it could not be finished and prepared for occupancy in less than three or four years, which is the longest possible time the Patent Office, now occupied by this department, in the basement, and principal story, that each might be used for the purpose of the department. To accomplish this object, marble and granite piers and architraves have been introduced, which are not in the corresponding stories of the east wing. These and other additions have cost about \$100,000, and yet the whole expenditure has not been expended. Ground has been secured for public purposes have been reserved, and many years will not elapse ere there will be a universal regret that more space had not been retained.

The estimates for improving and ornamenting the reservations have been increased.

The plan adopted for the "Mall" should be more vigorously prosecuted. Its present appearance is inelegant, when, with a comparatively small expenditure, it might easily be converted into a beautiful park. The grounds for which suitable appropriations were made by Congress have been well improved, and are admired by all for their neatness, beauty, and tastefulness.

In this connection, I would repeat my former recommendations, that provision be made for the employment of a competent and intelligent landscape gardener, to superintend the improvements of the public grounds, and to direct and distribute properly the subordinates and laborers.

The Long Bridge, as it is usually called, crossing the Potomac river from Washington city, is much out of repair. It should be replaced by a substantial and permanent structure, in a matter that caused such solicitude to one of your most distinguished predecessors, and surely is not unworthy consideration now, when the bridge is so indispensable, and the means of defraying the cost of construction are so abundant.

The appropriations for the erection of buildings for the National Hospital for the Insane are nearly exhausted. They have been judiciously and economically expended, under the supervision and control of its intelligent superintendent. The whole sum appropriated is \$171,241, which covers the cost of the farm, the present buildings, furnishing, fitting up, and all other incidental expenses. Although originally designed for ninety patients, the present accommodations will be required, and more room and out-buildings will be required, and have, therefore, estimated for them. The sum, though apparently large, will not be so considered, when the humane purposes of the expenditure are contemplated. No class of public beneficiaries calls more loudly on the generosity of the Government than the inmates of the hospital. The object being "the most humane care and enlightened treatment of the insane of the army and navy of the United States and of the District of Columbia," strongly commends it to the best and kindest feelings of the human heart.

Although the buildings were not completed, yet there were upwards of sixty patients received into the hospital and taken care of previously and subsequent to the 30th June last.

The board of visitors, authorized by act of Congress, has been appointed, organized, and are faithfully and cheerfully discharging their appropriate duties. The institution has been quietly kept in; restore that harmony in the compensation of all the judicial officers that should exist; obviate the necessity of the large disbursement in this department, which, with impunity, be abused; restrain the officers from imposing upon the Government, and conduct more carefully to the ends of justice. The large increase of the judicial expenses, besides other grave considerations, should induce action upon this subject.

The Government has adopted the plan of constructing its own buildings for court purposes, in different States, but nothing has yet been done in Baltimore, New York, or Boston. With this view, acts were passed by Congress giving you a limited power, which, however, was not exercised. The proposals which have been received for sites in New York and Boston were sent in as a criterion in making the proper appropriations. Nothing was effected, and the subject remains for the further action of Congress. I have no doubt the true course would be to make ample provision for the purchase of sites and the erection of buildings in these cities, expressly limiting the expenditure to the specific sums appropriated, leaving the selection of the sites, and the plans for the buildings, to the sound discretion of the President. Knowing the necessity that exists for these buildings in these cities, its consideration cannot be too strongly urged.

In my last annual report, I brought to your notice the number of terms the United States courts held in the different States, during each year, being two hundred and twenty-three terms, in eighty-eight different places. In several of them, there is very little local or personal interest, and the reason for holding the courts there having ceased; and the expense and inconvenience to the judges and officers, as well as the Government, are not trifling. By way of illustration, I will instance one judicial circuit only. By the act of Congress, approved March 3, 1849, "For the better organization of the district court of the United States, within the State of Louisiana, the State was divided into two judicial districts—the eastern and the western. Stated annual sessions of the court for the western district were directed to be held at Opelousas, Alexandria, Shreveport, and Monroe, and the judge was authorized to appoint a clerk to reside at each of these places. By the amendatory act, approved July 29, 1850, another term of the court was required to be held at St. Joseph's, and the judge authorized to appoint a clerk to reside at that place also. The fee bill of 26th February, 1853, provides that, when the compensation of any clerk shall be less than \$500 per annum, the difference between his receipts and that sum, shall be paid from the Treasury. It appears from the enrollment accounts of the clerk at St. Joseph's, that from the 4th of May, 1854, to the 30th of May, 1855, his fees only amounted to \$12 95, and that, during the whole of that period, there was not a single session of the court held at that place. From the 1st of January, 1853, to the 31st of December, 1854, the clerk at Monroe did not hear anything, and during the whole of these years no session of the court was held. At Alexandria the clerk's fees, from the 15th of April to the 31st of December, 1854, amounted to \$2 50, and the court was in session only two times.

Thus, it will be seen, that in an aggregate period of about four years, only two terms of the court have been held at these three places. The department is not in possession of reports from Opelousas and Shreveport, though it is not doubted the same condition of things prevails there. If, as the cost to the United States for the clerk's services alone, over and above the fees earned in a period of about four years, would amount to nearly \$10,000 without any corresponding benefit to the Government.

opened under favorable auspices, and bids fair to be one of the first in the country.

The Washington Infirmary also claims and merits attention. It is under the management of some of the most distinguished physicians of this District, who gratuitously labor in it to alleviate the sufferings of those under their charge. The annual appropriation made by Congress enables it to relieve many non-resident paupers who are suddenly seized with disease in this city. At this time eighteen are provided for, but the number could be increased to forty by doubling the usual appropriation. This is demanded by the increase of the number of strangers visiting the city and requiring such aid.

The Penitentiary is so planned and constructed as not to be well protected against fire, or the escape of bold and ingenious convicts. Its indebtedness has been paid, the contract system partially adopted, and the strictest economy and accountability established.

On the 23d March, 1855, provisions for ten clerks in the office of the Secretary of the Interior, in addition to the chief clerk. In consequence of the large increase in the business of the department, that number has been found to be so insufficient as to render it necessary to transfer to it, under the authority contained in the charter of the clerk of the fourth class from the General Land Office, and one of a lower grade from the Pension Office.

While such transfers have supplied the want here, they have, at the same time, to a similar extent, weakened the offices from which they have been made.

Under these circumstances, it is better that additional clerks in this Department—One of the third and one of the fourth class.

In this connection, I beg leave to recur to the compensation of its chief clerk. The proper discharge of its duties requires talents of a high order, great intelligence, and much experience. One of the two other departments have, besides chief clerks, and most excellent ones, each of whom receives \$3,000 per annum, whilst his salary is only \$2,200. Knowing the amount and value of his services, I hesitate not to say that his compensation should, in justice, be equal to theirs, which is not too large. It was authorized to appoint a clerk to reside at each of these places. By the amendatory act, approved July 29, 1850, another term of the court was required to be held at St. Joseph's, and the judge authorized to appoint a clerk to reside at that place also. The fee bill of 26th February, 1853, provides that, when the compensation of any clerk shall be less than \$500 per annum, the difference between his receipts and that sum, shall be paid from the Treasury. It appears from the enrollment accounts of the clerk at St. Joseph's, that from the 4th of May, 1854, to the 30th of May, 1855, his fees only amounted to \$12 95, and that, during the whole of that period, there was not a single session of the court held at that place. From the 1st of January, 1853, to the 31st of December, 1854, the clerk at Monroe did not hear anything, and during the whole of these years no session of the court was held. At Alexandria the clerk's fees, from the 15th of April to the 31st of December, 1854, amounted to \$2 50, and the court was in session only two times.

Thus, it will be seen, that in an aggregate period of about four years, only two terms of the court have been held at these three places. The department is not in possession of reports from Opelousas and Shreveport, though it is not doubted the same condition of things prevails there. If, as the cost to the United States for the clerk's services alone, over and above the fees earned in a period of about four years, would amount to nearly \$10,000 without any corresponding benefit to the Government.

By the same, Congress has made appropriations for constructing court-houses, in conjunction with the new public buildings. Their necessity becomes daily more apparent. The public money may not be so judiciously expended, and I doubt whether it will be applied to purposes of greater utility.

Within a few years, the business of the Patent Office will require the whole of the entire building in which it now is, and the department of the Interior will have to seek elsewhere. If an appropriation for the erection of a proper department building were now made, it could not be finished and prepared for occupancy in less than three or four years, which is the longest possible time the Patent Office, now occupied by this department, in the basement, and principal story, that each might be used for the purpose of the department. To accomplish this object, marble and granite piers and architraves have been introduced, which are not in the corresponding stories of the east wing. These and other additions have cost about \$100,000, and yet the whole expenditure has not been expended. Ground has been secured for public purposes have been reserved, and many years will not elapse ere there will be a universal regret that more space had not been retained.

The estimates for improving and ornamenting the reservations have been increased.

The plan adopted for the "Mall" should be more vigorously prosecuted. Its present appearance is inelegant, when, with a comparatively small expenditure, it might easily be converted into a beautiful park. The grounds for which suitable appropriations were made by Congress have been well improved, and are admired by all for their neatness, beauty, and tastefulness.

In this connection, I would repeat my former recommendations, that provision be made for the employment of a competent and intelligent landscape gardener, to superintend the improvements of the public grounds, and to direct and distribute properly the subordinates and laborers.

The Long Bridge, as it is usually called, crossing the Potomac river from Washington city, is much out of repair. It should be replaced by a substantial and permanent structure, in a matter that caused such solicitude to one of your most distinguished predecessors, and surely is not unworthy consideration now, when the bridge is so indispensable, and the means of defraying the cost of construction are so abundant.

The appropriations for the erection of buildings for the National Hospital for the Insane are nearly exhausted. They have been judiciously and economically expended, under the supervision and control of its intelligent superintendent. The whole sum appropriated is \$171,241, which covers the cost of the farm, the present buildings, furnishing, fitting up, and all other incidental expenses. Although originally designed for ninety patients, the present accommodations will be required, and more room and out-buildings will be required, and have, therefore, estimated for them. The sum, though apparently large, will not be so considered, when the humane purposes of the expenditure are contemplated. No class of public beneficiaries calls more loudly on the generosity of the Government than the inmates of the hospital. The object being "the most humane care and enlightened treatment of the insane of the army and navy of the United States and of the District of Columbia," strongly commends it to the best and kindest feelings of the human heart.

Although the buildings were not completed, yet there were upwards of sixty patients received into the hospital and taken care of previously and subsequent to the 30th June last.

The board of visitors, authorized by act of Congress, has been appointed, organized, and are faithfully and cheerfully discharging their appropriate duties. The institution has been quietly kept in; restore that harmony in the compensation of all the judicial officers that should exist; obviate the necessity of the large disbursement in this department, which, with impunity, be abused; restrain the officers from imposing upon the Government, and conduct more carefully to the ends of justice. The large increase of the judicial expenses, besides other grave considerations, should induce action upon this subject.

The Government has adopted the plan of constructing its own buildings for court purposes, in different States, but nothing has yet been done in Baltimore, New York, or Boston. With this view, acts were passed by Congress giving you a limited power, which, however, was not exercised. The proposals which have been received for sites in New York and Boston were sent in as a criterion in making the proper appropriations. Nothing was effected, and the subject remains for the further action of Congress. I have no doubt the true course would be to make ample provision for the purchase of sites and the erection of buildings in these cities, expressly limiting the expenditure to the specific sums appropriated, leaving the selection of the sites, and the plans for the buildings, to the sound discretion of the President. Knowing the necessity that exists for these buildings in these cities, its consideration cannot be too strongly urged.

In my last annual report, I brought to your notice the number of terms the United States courts held in the different States, during each year, being two hundred and twenty-three terms, in eighty-eight different places. In several of them, there is very little local or personal interest, and the reason for holding the courts there having ceased; and the expense and inconvenience to the judges and officers, as well as the Government, are not trifling. By way of illustration, I will instance one judicial circuit only. By the act of Congress, approved March 3, 1849, "For the better organization of the district court of the United States, within the State of Louisiana, the State was divided into two judicial districts—the eastern and the western. Stated annual sessions